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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

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November 9, 2005

The Honorable Christopher Shays
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Security,
Emerging Threats, and International Relations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I understand that you intend to hold a private briefing for members of the Government Reform Committee with Iraq Deputy Prime Minister Ahmed Chalabi on Thursday, November 10, at 10:00 a.m., to discuss Iraq's reconstruction and political future. I agree that Mr. Chalabi should come before the Committee, but he should do so at a public hearing where he appears under oath to answer questions about his role in providing false intelligence to the United States, as well as the topics you propose.

Mr. Chalabi has repeatedly been cited as a source of false intelligence that led the U.S. to invade Iraq. According to multiple accounts, as the Administration was building its case for going to war in Iraq, Mr. Chalabi and his Iraqi National Congress (INC) provided the Administration with defectors who claimed to be able to confirm the existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Information the INC provided repeatedly turned out to be fraudulent or impossible to corroborate with available intelligence, and the credentials of the defectors were exaggerated. According to news accounts, intelligence experts such as the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research and the CIA had longstanding doubts about the reliability of INC information, but DOD offices embraced INC information and passed it to the White House without traditional layers of review.¹

¹ E.g., *The Manipulator*, The New Yorker (June 7, 2004); *The Wrong Target*, The American Prospect Online (Apr. 1, 2004); *The Stovepipe*, The New Yorker (Oct. 27, 2003).

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Mr. Chalabi also is under investigation by the FBI for allegedly leaking U.S. intelligence information to Iran. According to former U.S. intelligence officials, this leak "could have caused serious damage to U.S. national security."²

I do not know if these allegations are true. But if they are, Mr. Chalabi has betrayed U.S. interests, caused incalculable damage to our national security, and contributed to the death of more than 2,000 of our troops.

We should be holding Mr. Chalabi accountable for his actions, not providing him with a private audience with members. I therefore request that you revise your plans for Thursday to change the private meeting with Mr. Chalabi to a public hearing. As you may know, our Committee has previously brought members of foreign governments before the Committee for testimony at hearings. For example, Ambassador Luis Alberto Moreno of Columbia was sworn in and testified at a June 17, 2004, Committee hearing about the war on drugs. In the Senate, a member of the British Parliament, George Galloway, recently testified under oath about his dealings with the Oil for Food Program in Iraq.

I appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Henry A. Waxman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Henry" and last name "Waxman" clearly distinguishable.

Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Minority Member

² *Id.*; see also *The Conflict in Iraq: U.S. Begins Iran Leak Inquiry*, Los Angeles Times (June 3, 2004) (quoting a "U.S. official familiar with the case" as saying the leak was a "very serious breach").